

STARBLAZER

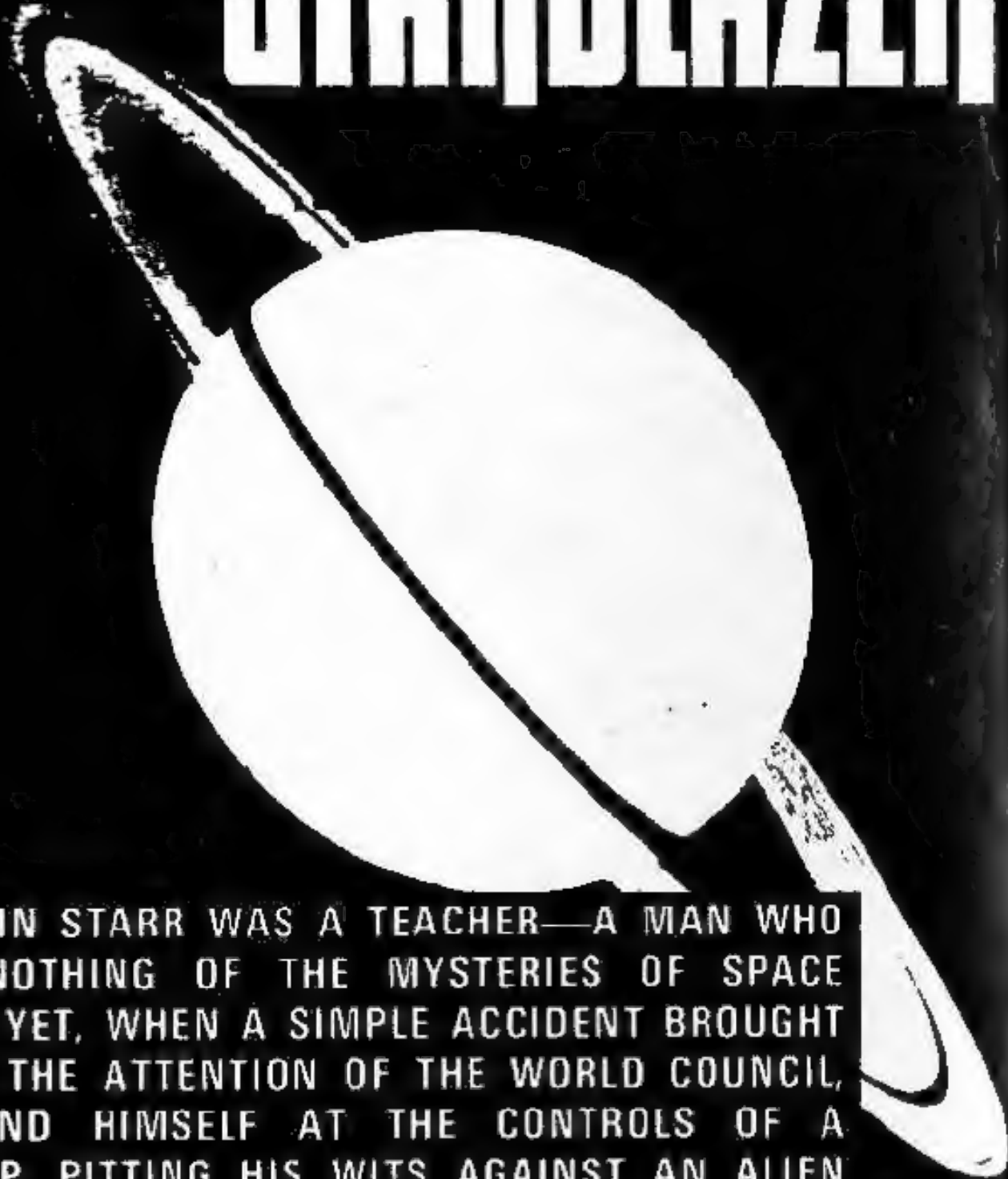
SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 76

16p

THE MIND OF MEREDITH MORGAN



STARBLAZER



BENJAMIN STARR WAS A TEACHER—A MAN WHO KNEW NOTHING OF THE MYSTERIES OF SPACE TRAVEL. YET, WHEN A SIMPLE ACCIDENT BROUGHT HIM TO THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL, HE FOUND HIMSELF AT THE CONTROLS OF A STARSHIP, PITTING HIS WITS AGAINST AN ALIEN COMPUTER, AND WARPING SPACE ITSELF—AND IF HE FAILED, EARTH WAS DOOMED TO AN ETERNAL HELL.

THE MIND OF

MEREDITH MORGAN

THE STARCruiser "BLAZER ONE" HAD JUST COMPLETED A TRAINING MISSION IN DEEP SPACE AND WAS RETURNING TO EARTH.



ON BOARD WERE A GROUP OF CADETS FROM THE SPACE ACADEMY.



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE ALL
DONE VERY WELL. WE'LL MAKE
SPACERS OF YOU YET.

THE SHIP WAS SUDDENLY SHAKEN BY A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION.



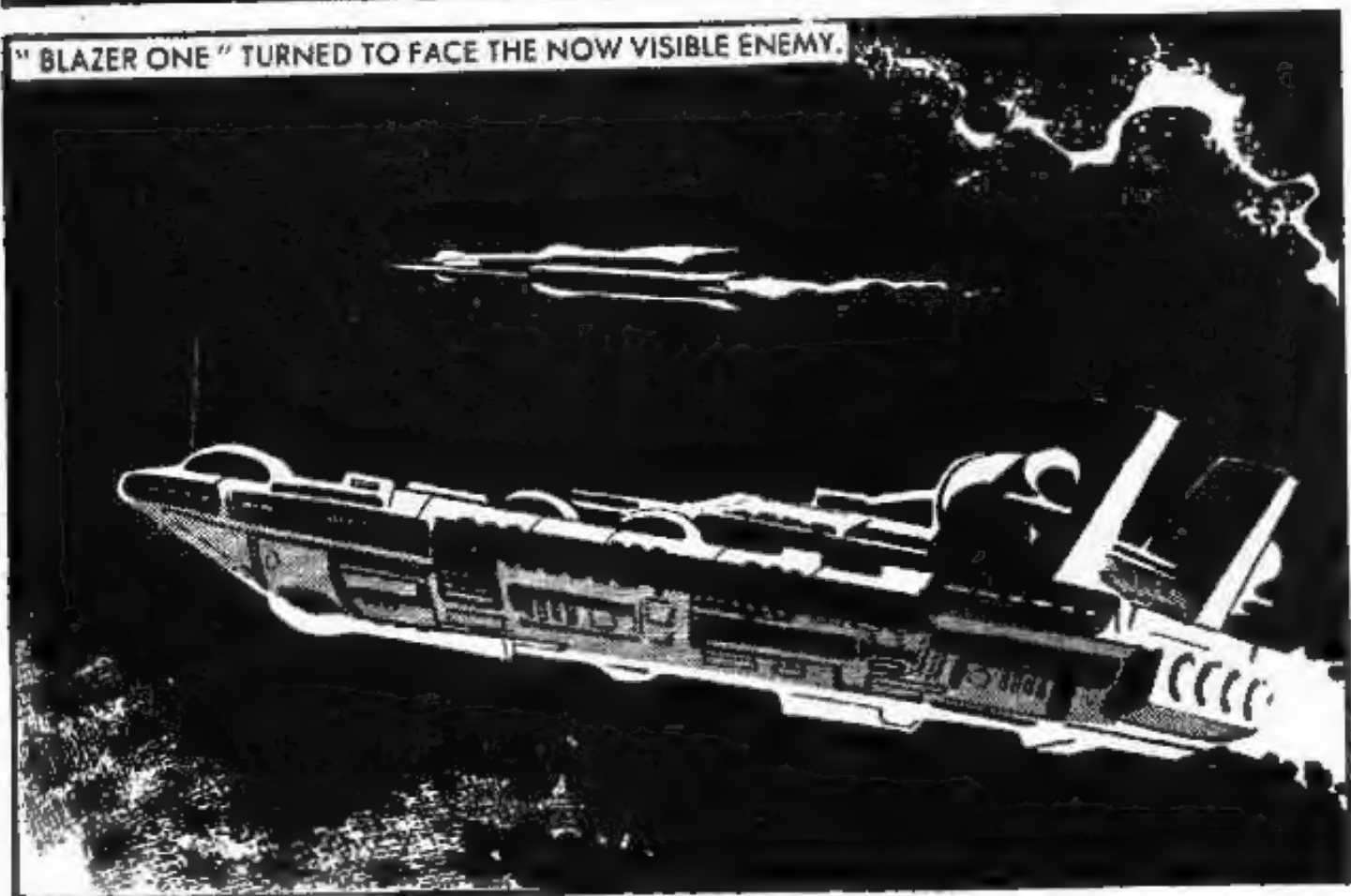
WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME?


CAPTAIN—WE'RE UNDER ATTACK.
CONCUSSION CHARGE JUST
DETONATED OFF THE STARBOARD
80W.





"BLAZER ONE" TURNED TO FACE THE NOW VISIBLE ENEMY.





THEY HAVE FIRED—LAUNCH
THE SHUTTLES. THEY WILL NOT
BE NOTICED IN THE
CONFUSION.

... A HIT! WE GOT HIM, CAPTAIN.

YES—BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM
TO HAVE AFFECTED HIM AT ALL.

THE SHUTTLES ARE IN POSITION.
OUR MEN ARE STANDING BY TO
BOARD. PRIME THE HANGFIRE
BOMB.

THE ALIEN SHIP WAS QUICK TO RETALIATE.

THAT WAS TOO
CLOSE FOR COMFORT!

THE HANGFIRE BOMB WAS A TIGHT BALL OF UNSTABLE ELEMENTS INCORPORATING A
RETARDING AGENT WHICH ALLOWED FOR DELAYED ACTION DETONATION. ITS FUNCTION
WAS TO PENETRATE THE HULL OF A SHIP AND EXPLODE INSIDE, KILLING PERSONNEL
BUT LEAVING THE SHIP INTACT.

THE SEARING WHITE HEAT INCINERATED THE
EARTH GUNNERY CREW.



IN THE CHAOS AND CONFUSION, NO-ONE HEARD THE CHARGES THAT BLEW THE OUTER
AIR-LOCK DOORS... NO-ONE REALISED THAT THE "BLAZER ONE" HAD BEEN BOARDED.

RESISTANCE MUST BE MET WITH
DEATH, BUT THE CADETS ARE NOT TO
BE HARMED.





THE CADETS WERE HERDED TOGETHER.

GET IN THERE WITH THE
OTHERS. YOU WILL BE DEALT
WITH SHORTLY.

THE CAPTAIN ORDERED HIS MEN TO PUT DOWN THEIR ARMS.

... WHAT DO YOU WANT OF US?



THE ALIEN ORDERED THE CADETS TO BE BROUGHT ONTO THE BRIDGE.

THERE'S SOMETHING ON THIS SHIP YOU
WANT OR YOU WOULD HAVE SIMPLY
BLOWN US TO PIECES. WHAT IS IT?





"BLAZER ONE" POWERED ITS WAY BACK TO EARTH, LANDING IN NEW LONDON. AT THAT VERY MOMENT ON ROUTE AG1 --





THIS KNIFE IS GOING TO MAKE SURE YOU
DON'T SAY A WORD—EVER!



AS THE YOUNG MAN FOUGHT FOR HIS LIFE, A POLICE PATROL ARRIVED.

FREEZE! FIRST ONE TO MOVE
GETS A PARALYSIS BOLT.



DETAILS OF BEN AND HIS ADVERSARY WERE RELAYED DIRECTLY TO THE CENTRAL POLICE COMPUTER.



MOMENTS LATER—

GARRET RICE... ILLEGAL ALCOHOL LEVEL IN BLOOD-STREAM. TWO PREVIOUS MISDEAMORS. WE'RE TAKING YOU IN. AS FOR YOU—STARR, THERE'S A SECTION 47A OUT ON YOU... DETAIN AND DELIVER—COME WITH US.



A 47A... THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE. WHO AM I TO BE DELIVERED TO?



THE WORLD COUNCIL WANTS TO SEE YOU AT THEIR NEW LONDON CHAMBER, AND THEY WANT YOU YESTERDAY. SO QUIT TALKING. AND LET'S GO.

LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER, BENJAMIN STARR FOUND HIMSELF FACING AN ASSEMBLY OF THE MOST POWERFUL MEN ON EARTH.

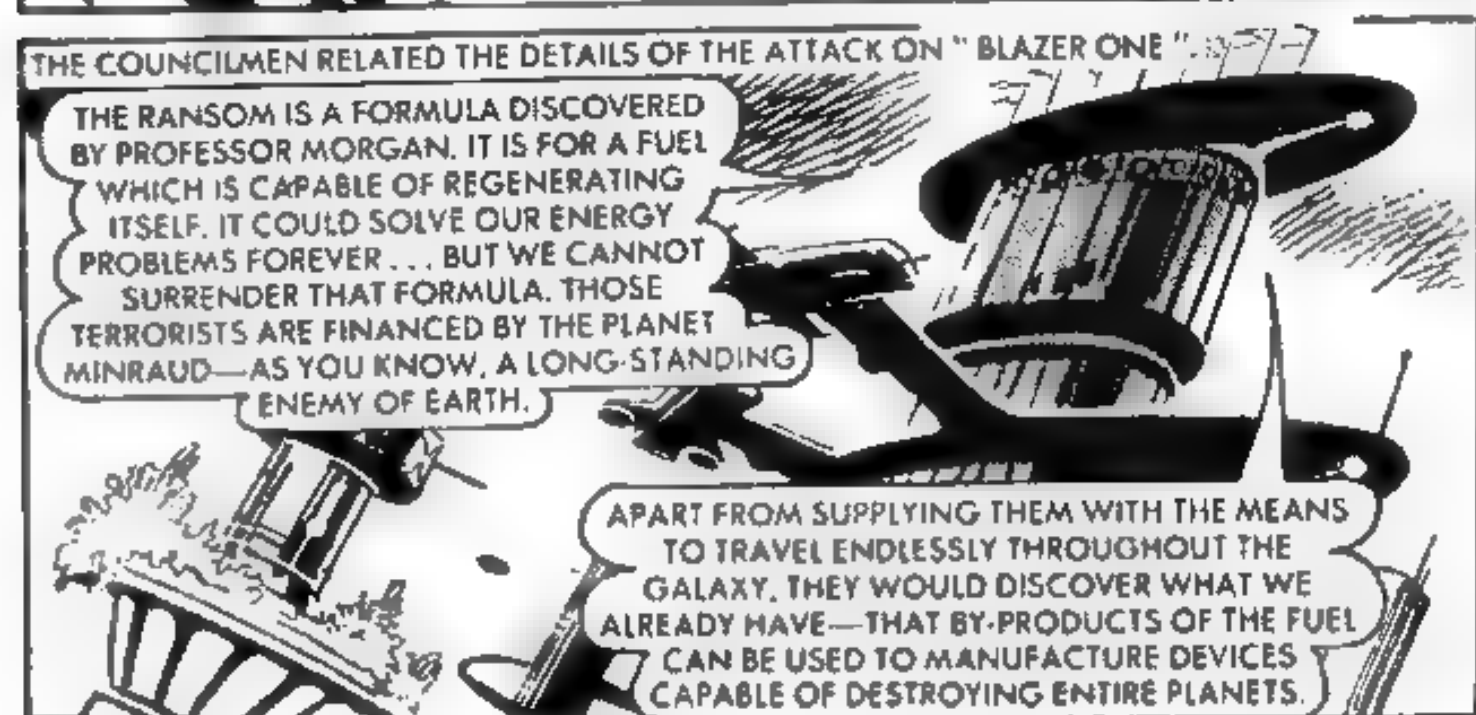
DON'T LOOK SO WORRIED, STARR! WE'VE ASKED YOU HERE TO ENLIST YOUR HELP. WE'LL BRIEF YOU SHORTLY, BUT FIRST LET'S SEE WHAT THE COMPUTER SAYS ABOUT YOU.

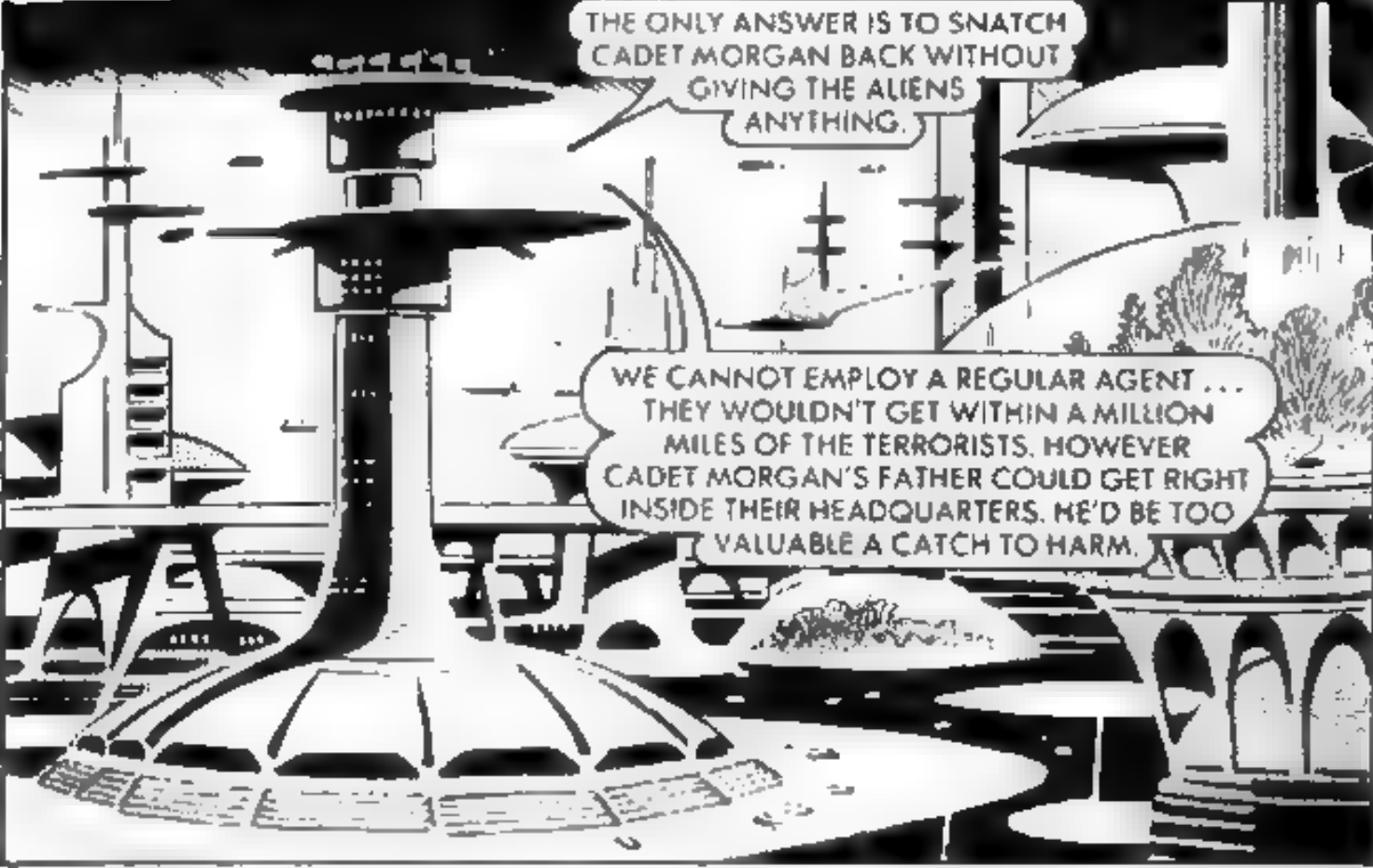


"BENJAMIN STARR... AGED 26... SINGLE... POSSESSES A DEGREE IN PHILOSOPHY, WORKS FOR THE WORLD EDUCATIONAL TRUST, HAS NO HISTORY OF CRIME." A MODEL CITIZEN, EH?

I DO MY BEST.
BUT WHY A 47A.







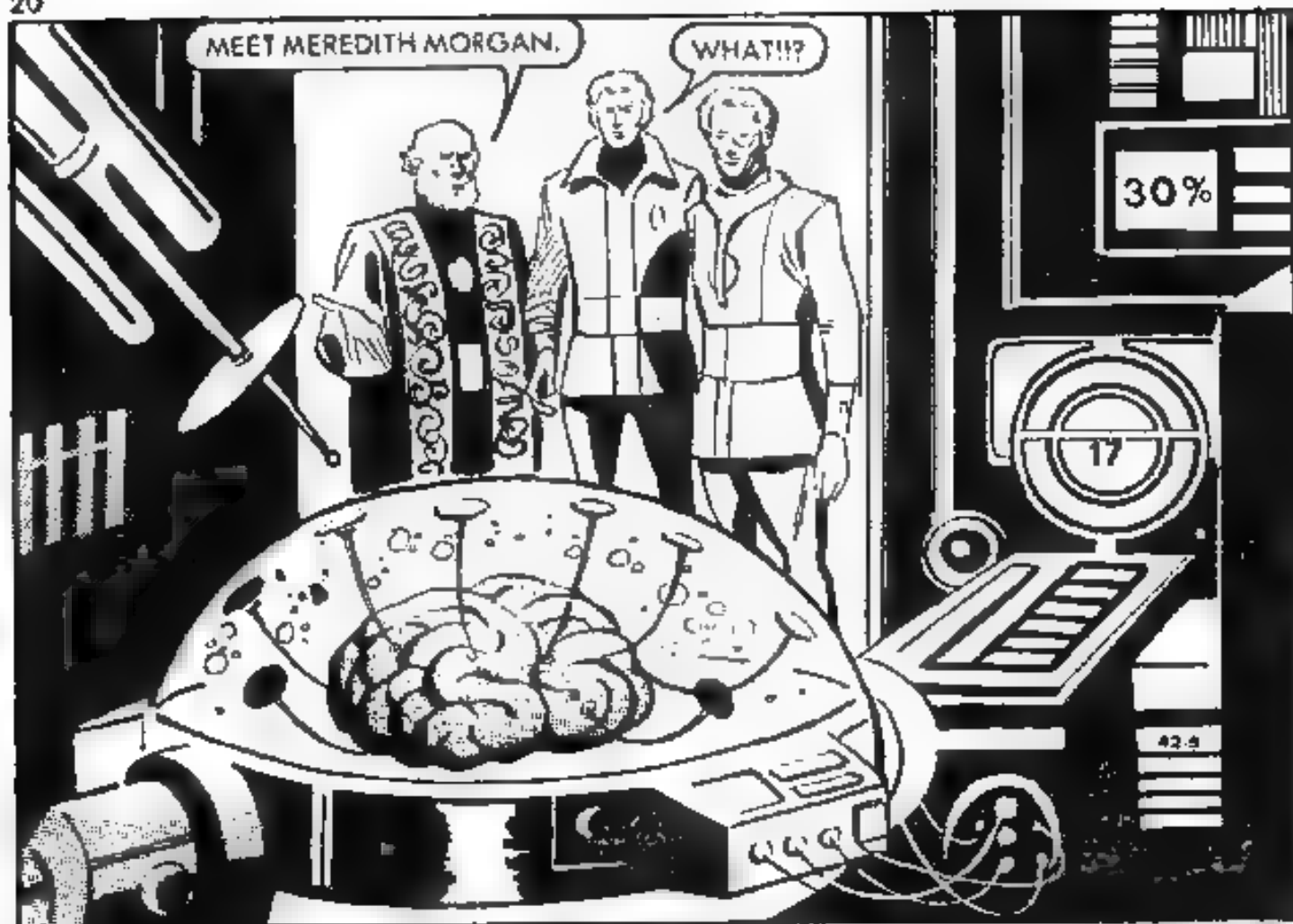
THE ONLY ANSWER IS TO SNATCH
CADET MORGAN BACK WITHOUT
GIVING THE ALIENS
ANYTHING.

WE CANNOT EMPLOY A REGULAR AGENT ...
THEY WOULDN'T GET WITHIN A MILLION
MILES OF THE TERRORISTS. HOWEVER
CADET MORGAN'S FATHER COULD GET RIGHT
INSIDE THEIR HEADQUARTERS. HE'D BE TOO
VALUABLE A CATCH TO HARM.



PROFESSOR MORGAN HAS FLATLY
REFUSED TO CONTINUE ANY OF HIS
HIGHLY STRATEGIC WORK FOR US
UNTIL WE RECOVER HIS SON.

WE CANNOT FORCE HIM TO WORK. IN
FACT WE HAVE TO TREAT HIM VERY
GENTLY INDEED. YOU'LL SEE WHY ■ A
MOMENT.



PROFESSOR MORGAN HAD THIS BUILT, BEN. IT'S CALLED THE SYMBIOTRONIC HELMET, WEAR IT AT ALL TIMES AND YOUR BRAIN WILL ■ LINKED TO HIS. ALL OF HIS EXPERIENCES, ALL OFF HIS EXPERTISE, WILL ■ YOURS.

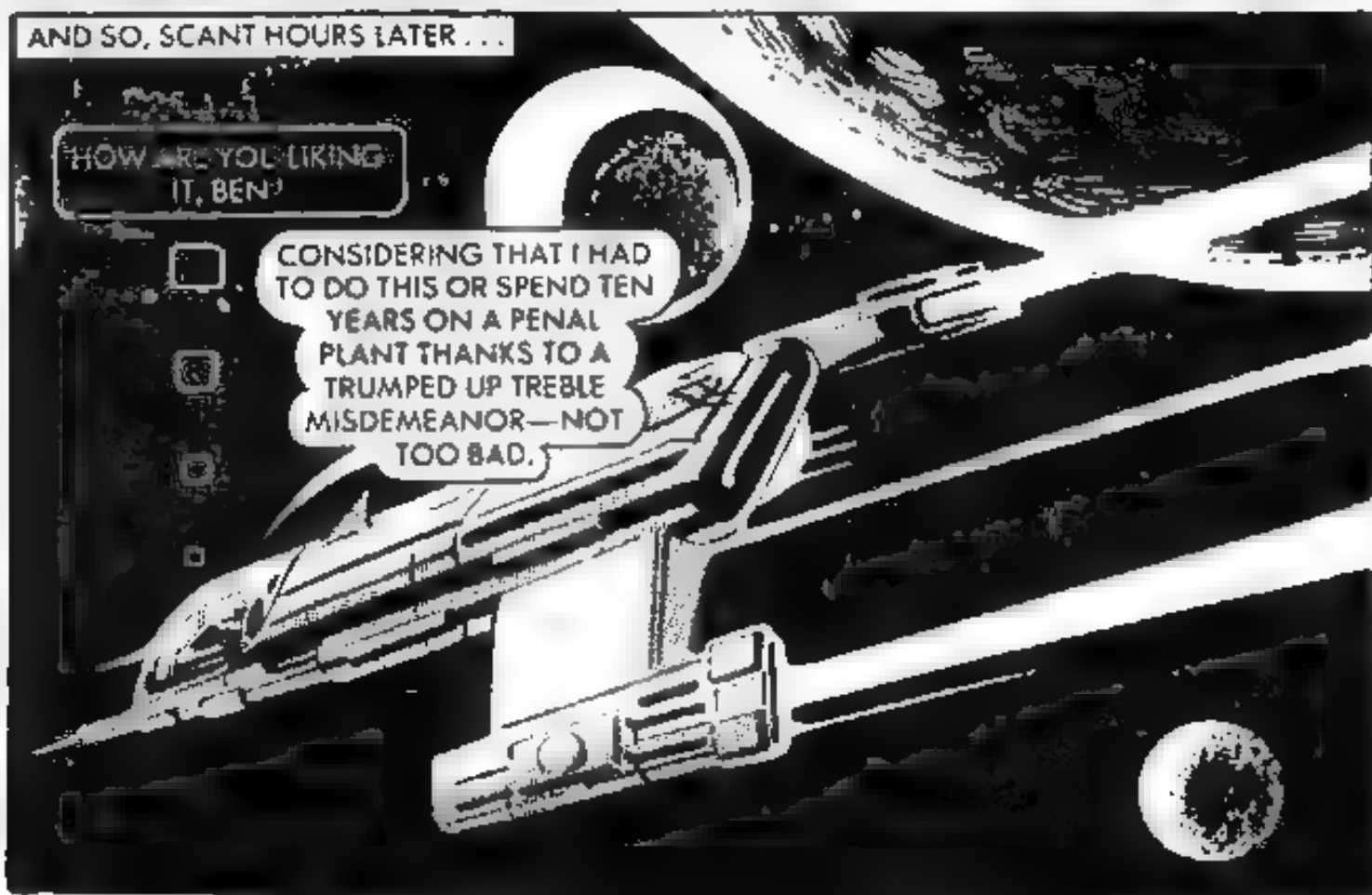
SO THERE'S NO NEED FOR FURTHER DELAY, IS THERE? ■ YOU START OUT STRAIGHTAWAY, I CAN CONTINUE YOUR BRIEFING VIA THE HELMET.

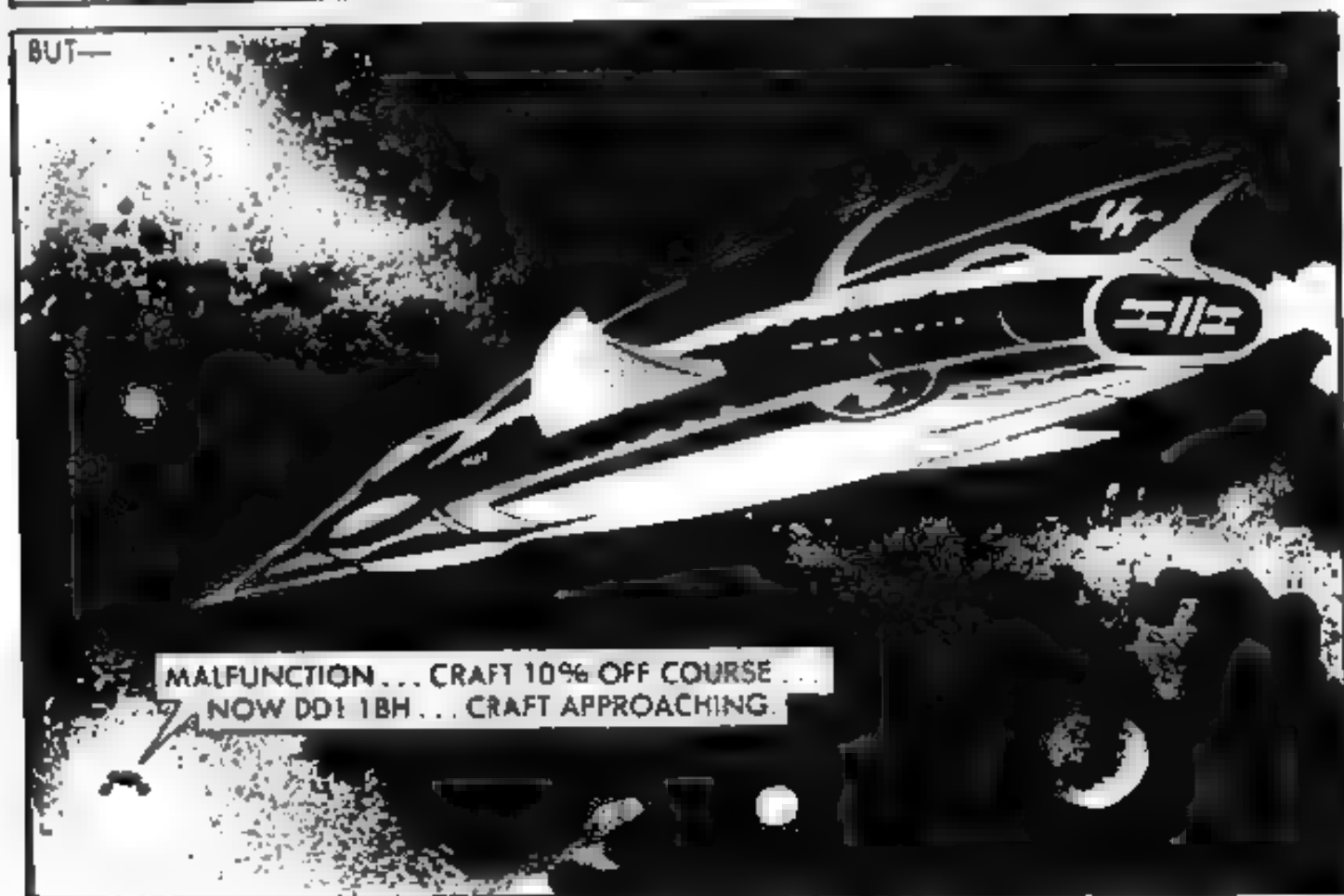
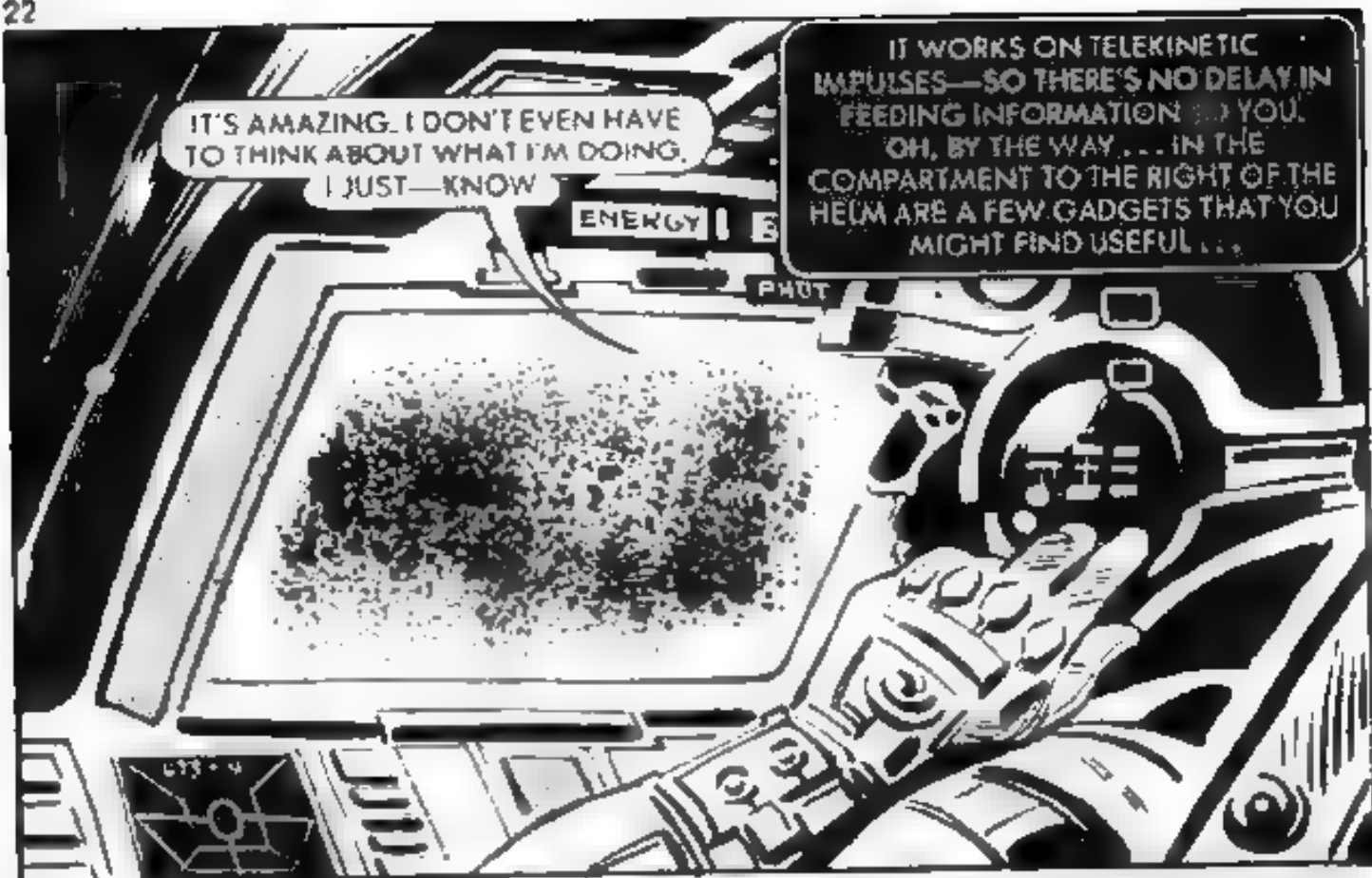


AND SO, SCANT HOURS LATER...

HOW ARE YOU LIKING IT, BEN?

CONSIDERING THAT I HAD TO DO THIS OR SPEND TEN YEARS ON A PENAL PLANT THANKS TO A TRUMPED UP TREBLE MISDEMEANOR—NOT TOO BAD.





WHAT THE . . .!! SOME STRANGE
FORCE DRAGGING THE SHIP
TOWARDS THAT BLACK CRUISER

ONLY A TRACTOR BEAM,
BEN. DON'T WORRY.

BEN'S SHIP WAS DRAGGED BEHIND THE ALIEN CRUISER
UNTIL EVENTUALLY THEY REACHED A SPACE STATION

PLEASE USE DOCKING
BAY NUMBER SIX.



THE DOCKING COMPLETED, BEN WAS LED TO A LARGE ROOM.

YOU DO NOT LOOK LIKE MEREDITH-
MORGAN...

I WILL TALK ONLY
TO YOUR LEADER.



THE LEADER SOON ARRIVED—

I AM RRAGG... AND AS YOU
SEE YOUR SON IS UNHARMED.
IF I MAY SAY SO, YOU LOOK
TOO YOUNG TO HAVE A SON OF
THAT AGE.

HAVE YOU NEVER HEARD OF
COSMETIC SURGERY? GET READY
TO LEAVE, SON.

YES, FATHER.







RRAGG WAS FINALLY SATISFIED—



IN THE CELL—

WELL DONE, MATTHEW. YOU HELPED FOOL THEM INTO BELIEVING THAT I'M YOUR FATHER. MY NAME'S REALLY BEN STARR.

I RECOGNISED THE HELMET. WHAT NOW?

I HAVE A FEW DEVICES THAT SHOULD HELP. SUCH AS THIS ONE. IT'S A LOCAL MOLECULAR FREQUENCY MODULATOR—BUT I HAVEN'T HAD THE CHANCE TO TRY IT.

A MOLECULAR FREQUENCY MODULATOR COULD ALTER THE DENSITY OF AN OBJECT'S MOLECULES IN A SMALL AREA—MAKING THAT AREA OF THE OBJECT THICKER AND HEAVIER THAN BEFORE.

NOW I POINT IT AT THE WALL...

ACTIVATED





BEN AND MATT SPED AWAY FROM THE ALIEN SPACE STATION.

WE TOOK THEM BY SURPRISE, BUT
WE WON'T DO THAT AGAIN!

I'LL HANDLE THE
LASER CANNON, BEN.



THE TWO ESCAPERS PREPARED TO ENGAGE THE ALIENS IN BATTLE.

YOU HANDLE THE SHIP
BEAUTIFULLY, BEN.



IT'S YOU THAT'S DOING THE REAL
PILOTING... I'M JUST A PAIR
OF HANDS ON THE HELM.

MATT PROVED HIMSELF TO BE A GOOD MARKSMAN.

RRAGG WAS FURIOUS WITH HIS MEN FOR ALLOWING THE HOSTAGES TO ESCAPE—

IT'S A SMALL TERRAN STARHOPPER,
WE'RE FASTER AND MORE HEAVILY
ARMED. BLOW IT TO PIECES, OR
I'LL VAPOURISE YOU.

I... I'M TRYING SIR.





WELL YOU'RE NOT
TRYING HARD ENOUGH.

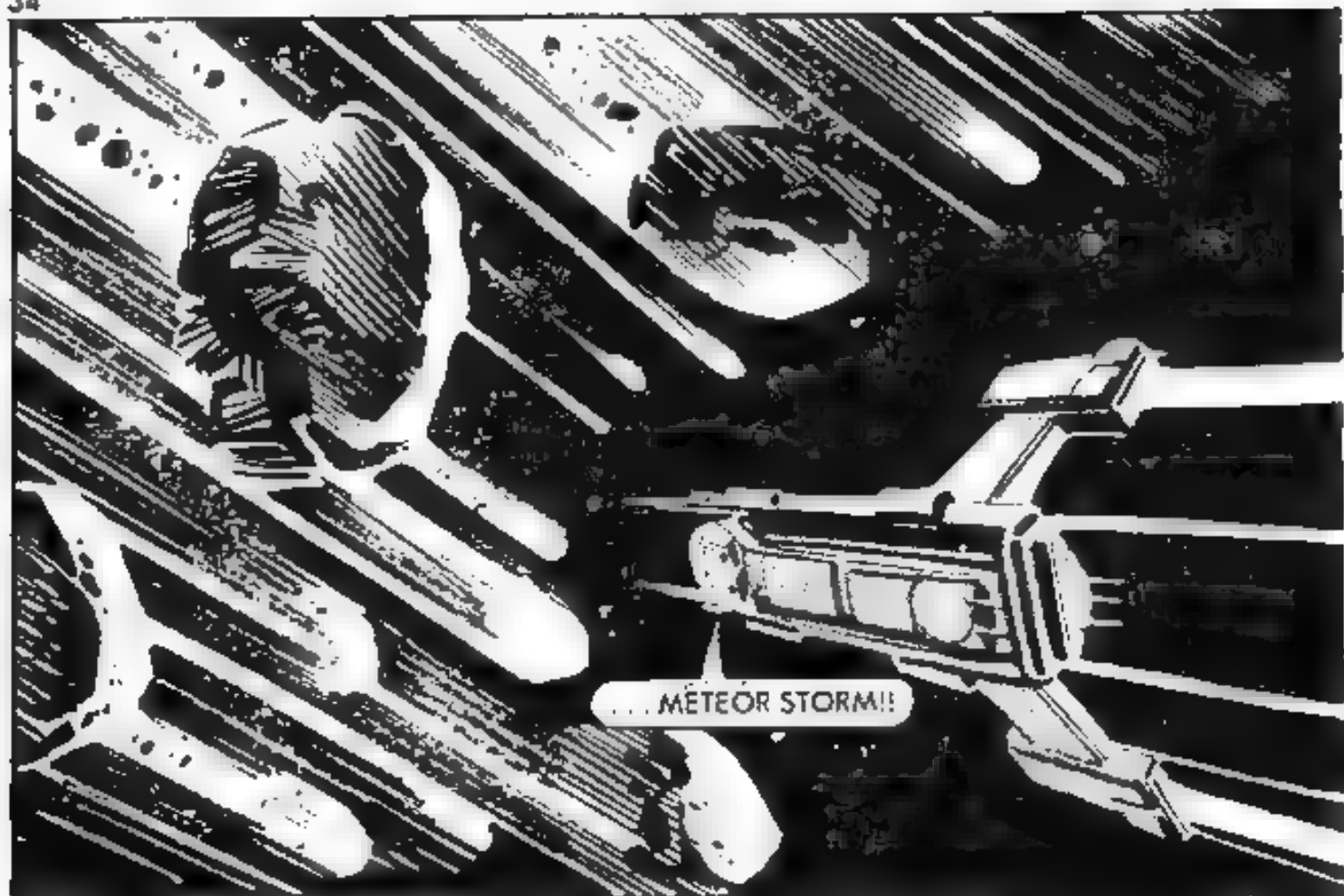
ABOARD THE STARHOPPER.



I THINK WE'RE OUTFRUNNING THEM.

YOU'RE RIGHT, BEN, LOOK—
THEY'RE TURNING BACK.





A METEOR STORM WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST HAZARDS A SPACER COULD FACE. THOUSANDS OF TONS OF ROCK RAINED DOWN ON THE STARHOPPER, WHICH SUDDENLY SEEMED VERY FLIMSY TO ITS OCCUPANTS.



WITH THE MIND OF MEREDITH MORGAN CONTROLLING HIS HANDS, BEN THREW THE STARHOPPER TO THE LEFT, TO THE RIGHT, UP, DOWN — EVERYWHERE.

BEN... WE'RE HIT.

HANG ON, WE'RE NEARLY OUT OF IT...

DOESN'T LOOK TOO GOOD. WE'RE HOLED NEAR THE MAIN REACTOR, AND LOSING POWER. IT'S JUST A PATCH-UP JOB, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO LAND TO DO IT. CHECK OUR CO-ORDINATES, MATT. SEE IF YOU CAN FIND SOMEPLACE FOR US TO SET DOWN.






IF WE DON'T LAND SOON WE'RE
JUST GOING TO RUN OUT OF POWER
AND WE'LL DIE IN SPACE ANYWAY.

MINRAUD HERE WE COME!

AS THE STARHOPPER DREW NEAR TO MINRAUD.



HMMM... STILL A LOT OF METEOR
ACTIVITY AROUND. I WONDER...?

... I'D SAY IT'S OUR ONLY
CHANCE TO GET PAST
MINRAUD'S ORBITAL
DEFENCES.



BEN SELECTED A SUITABLY SIZED PIECE OF SPACE ROCK, AND WENT AFTER IT.



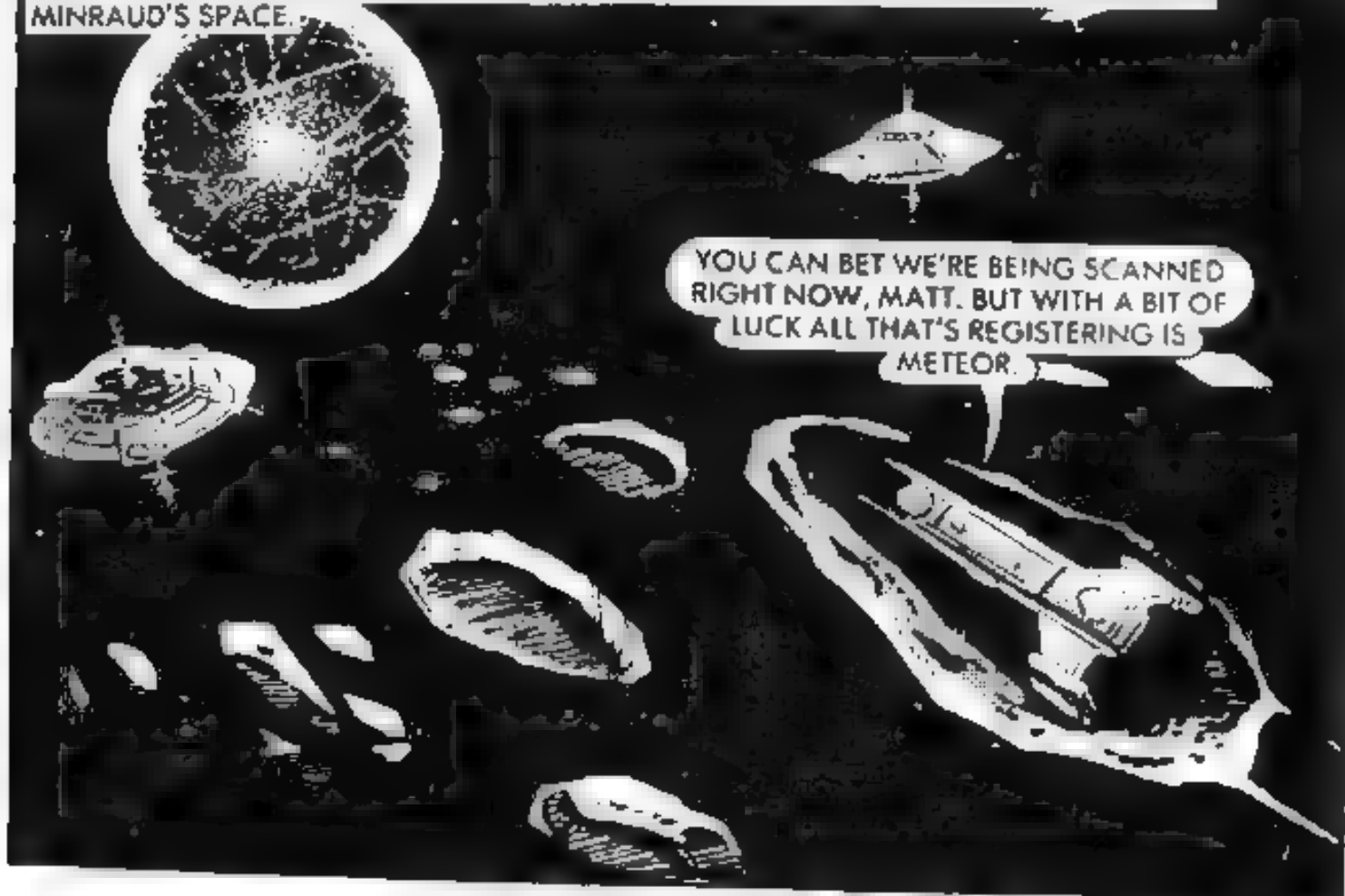
ROCKET POWERED GRAPPLING IRONS STREAKED TOWARDS THE METEOR AND EMBEDDED THEMSELVES IN IT

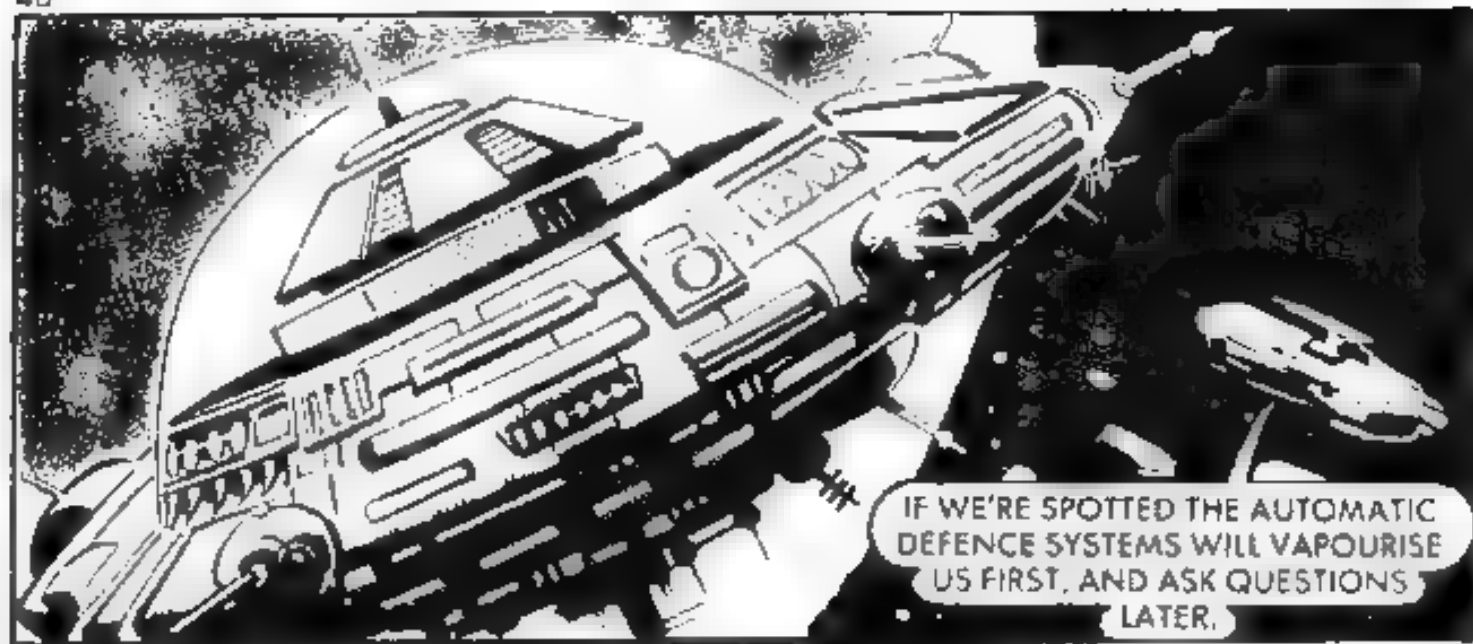
OKAY. NOW REEL US IN SO THAT WE'RE SITTING RIGHT ON TOP OF HER.



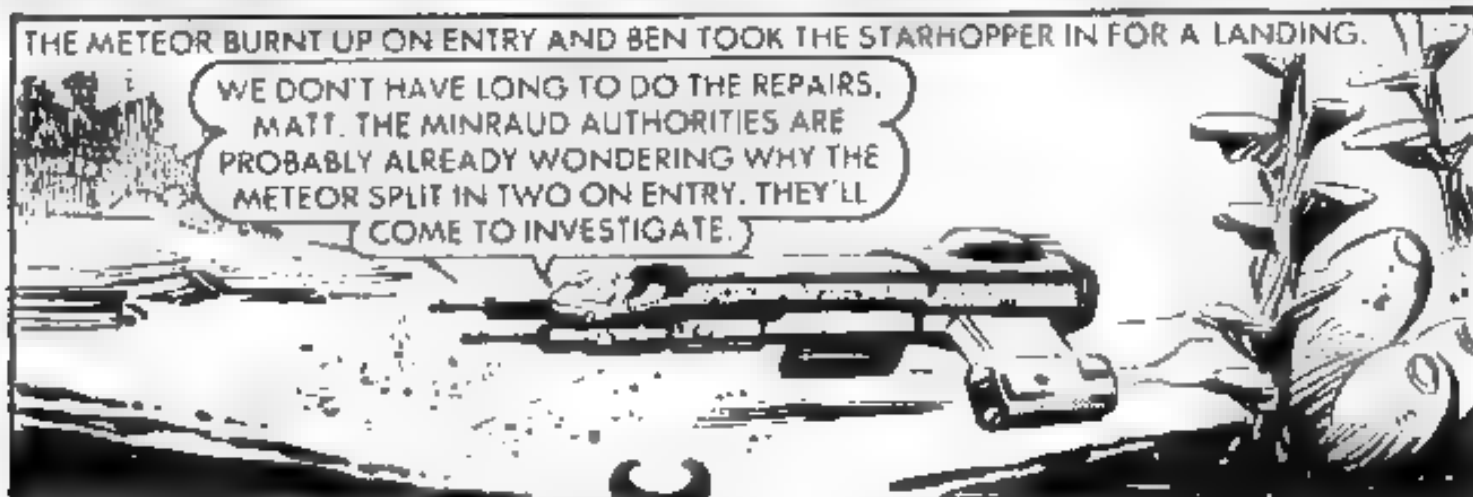
WITH THE STARHOPPER FIRMLY ANCHORED TO THE METEOR, BEN PREPARED TO ENTER MINRAUD'S SPACE.

YOU CAN BET WE'RE BEING SCANNED RIGHT NOW, MATT. BUT WITH A BIT OF LUCK ALL THAT'S REGISTERING IS METEOR.





IF WE'RE SPOTTED THE AUTOMATIC DEFENCE SYSTEMS WILL VAPOURISE US FIRST, AND ASK QUESTIONS LATER.



THE METEOR BURNT UP ON ENTRY AND BEN TOOK THE STARHOPPER IN FOR A LANDING.

WE DON'T HAVE LONG TO DO THE REPAIRS, MATT. THE MINRAUD AUTHORITIES ARE PROBABLY ALREADY WONDERING WHY THE METEOR SPLIT IN TWO ON ENTRY. THEY'LL COME TO INVESTIGATE.



AS THEY LABOURED TO PATCH THE HOLE IN THE SIDE OF THEIR SHIP, BEN AND MATT WERE UNAWARE THAT THEY WERE BEING WATCHED.

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

I LOOK LIKE EARTHIES TO ME...



WHAT ARE EARTHIES DOING ON MINRAUD
ANYWAY? ... LET'S ASK THEM.



BIT FAR FROM HOME, EARTHIES?



OUR SHIP GOT HIT BY A METEOR.
WE HAD TO LAND HERE TO REPAIR IT.

THE MINRAUDAN LASHED OUT AT BEN, AND THAT WAS THE SIGNAL FOR A FULL-SCALE BRAWL.

WE DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE ...
WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE US ALONE?



MATT AND BEN WERE OUTNUMBERED —





BEN SOON CAME ACROSS A TOWNSHIP



IT DID NOT TAKE BEN LONG TO LOCATE THE GANG'S HOVERBIKES —

THOSE ARE THE GANG'S HOVERBIKES.
ALRIGHT, BETTER USE ONE OF MY
DEVICES.



YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING THAT BELONGS
TO ME, AND I WANT IT BACK.

NO CHANCE, EARTHIE. JUST THINK
YOURSELF LUCKY WE LET YOU LIVE.



YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE ... NOW SEE
HOW YOU LIKE A SUPERNOVA CHARGE.



BEN THREW A SMALL DEVICE INTO THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM.

A SUPERNOVA CHARGE WAS A BALL OF INTENSE LIGHT THAT BLINDED TEMPORARILY.

BEN MADE HIS GETAWAY IN THE CONFUSION —

GOT IT!

THIS IS THE QUICKEST WAY BACK.

LOWRIDER

BEN WAS BACK AT THE STARHOPPER WITHIN MINUTES.

I'VE FINISHED THE REPAIRS, BEN, AND SHE'S WARMED UP FOR TAKE OFF.

NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON... LOOK!

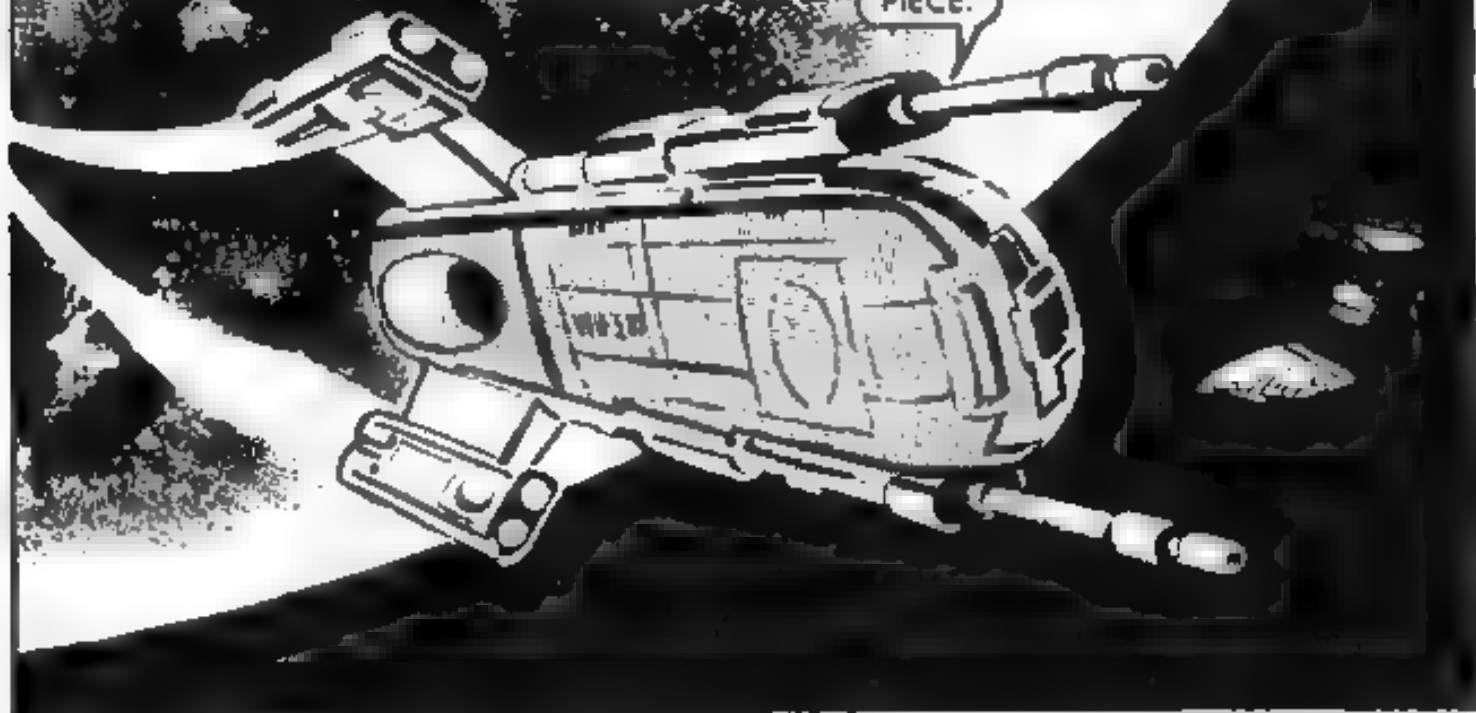


THE MINRAUD AUTHORITIES HAD COME TO INVESTIGATE THE "METEOR".



BEN HAD THE STARHOPPER ON FULL SPEED, BUT SPEED ALONE WAS NOT GOING TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY

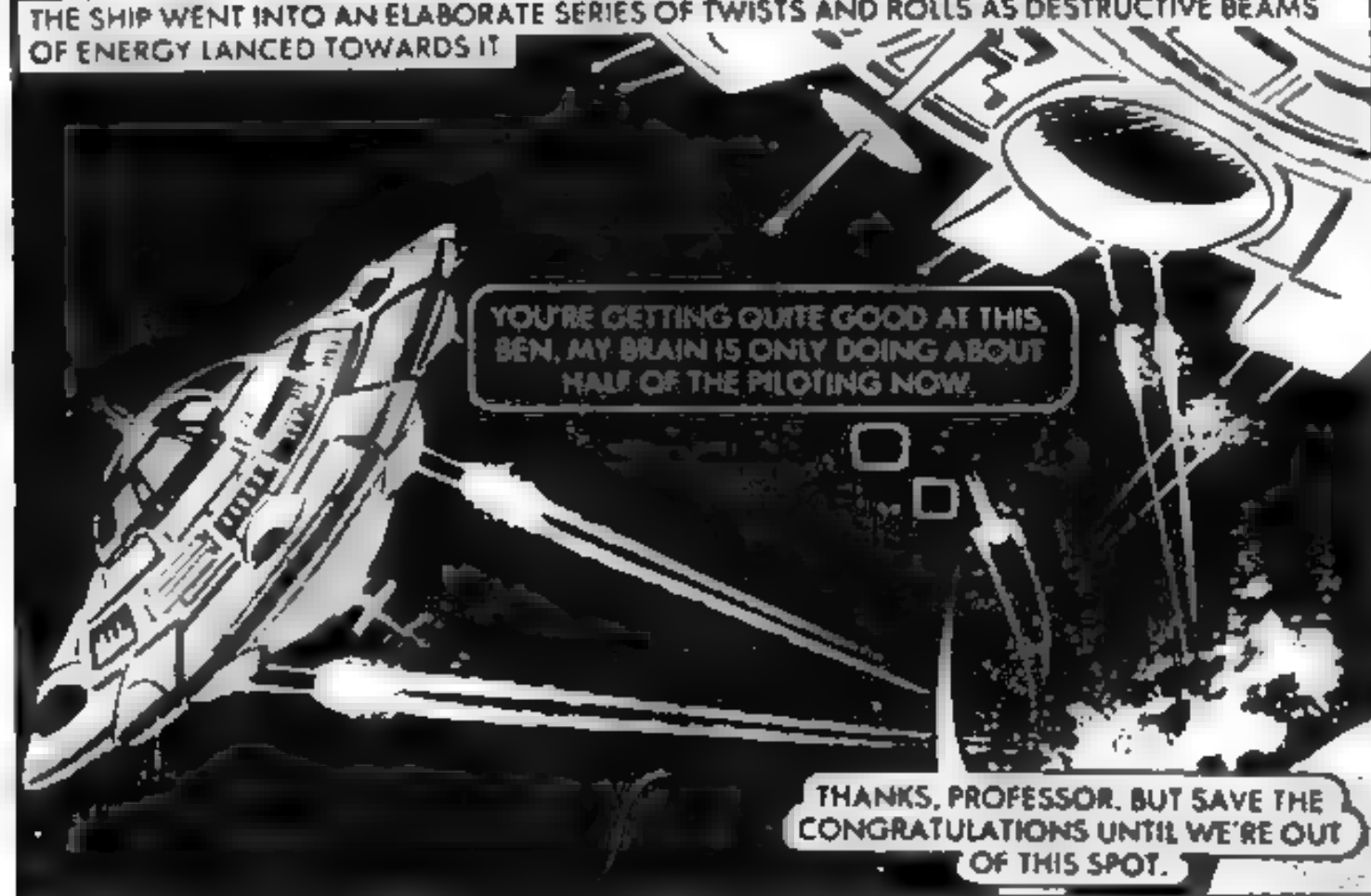
WE'RE COMING TO THE RING OF ORBITAL DEFENCES. WE'RE BACK TO FULL POWER NOW SO WITH A BIT OF LUCK WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET BY THEM IN ONE PIECE.



THE SHIP WENT INTO AN ELABORATE SERIES OF TWISTS AND ROLLS AS DESTRUCTIVE BEAMS OF ENERGY LANCED TOWARDS IT

YOU'RE GETTING QUITE GOOD AT THIS, BEN. MY BRAIN IS ONLY DOING ABOUT HALF OF THE PILOTING NOW.

THANKS, PROFESSOR. BUT SAVE THE CONGRATULATIONS UNTIL WE'RE OUT OF THIS SPOT.



THE ORBITAL DEFENCES WERE NOT ALL THAT BEN AND MATT HAD TO WORRY ABOUT

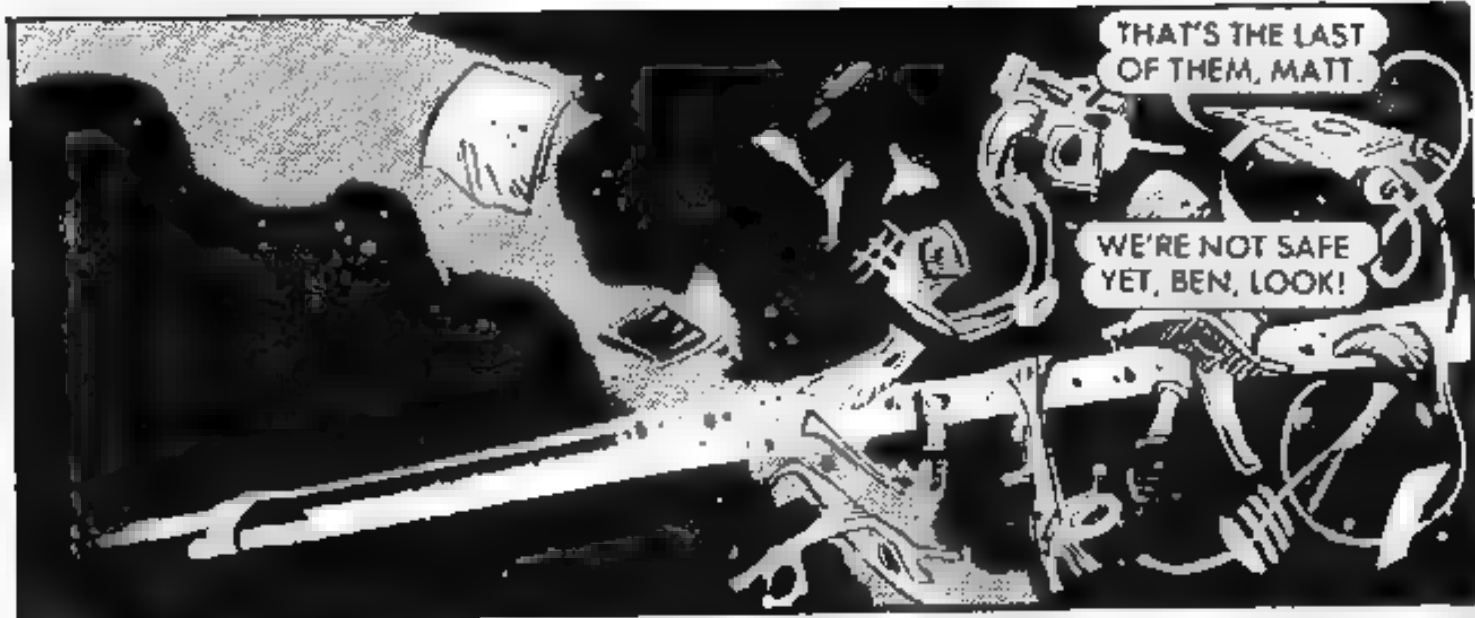
MINRAUD BATTLESHIPS CLOSING
FAST FROM THE REAR. GRAB THE
LASER CANNON, MATT.

WILCO...

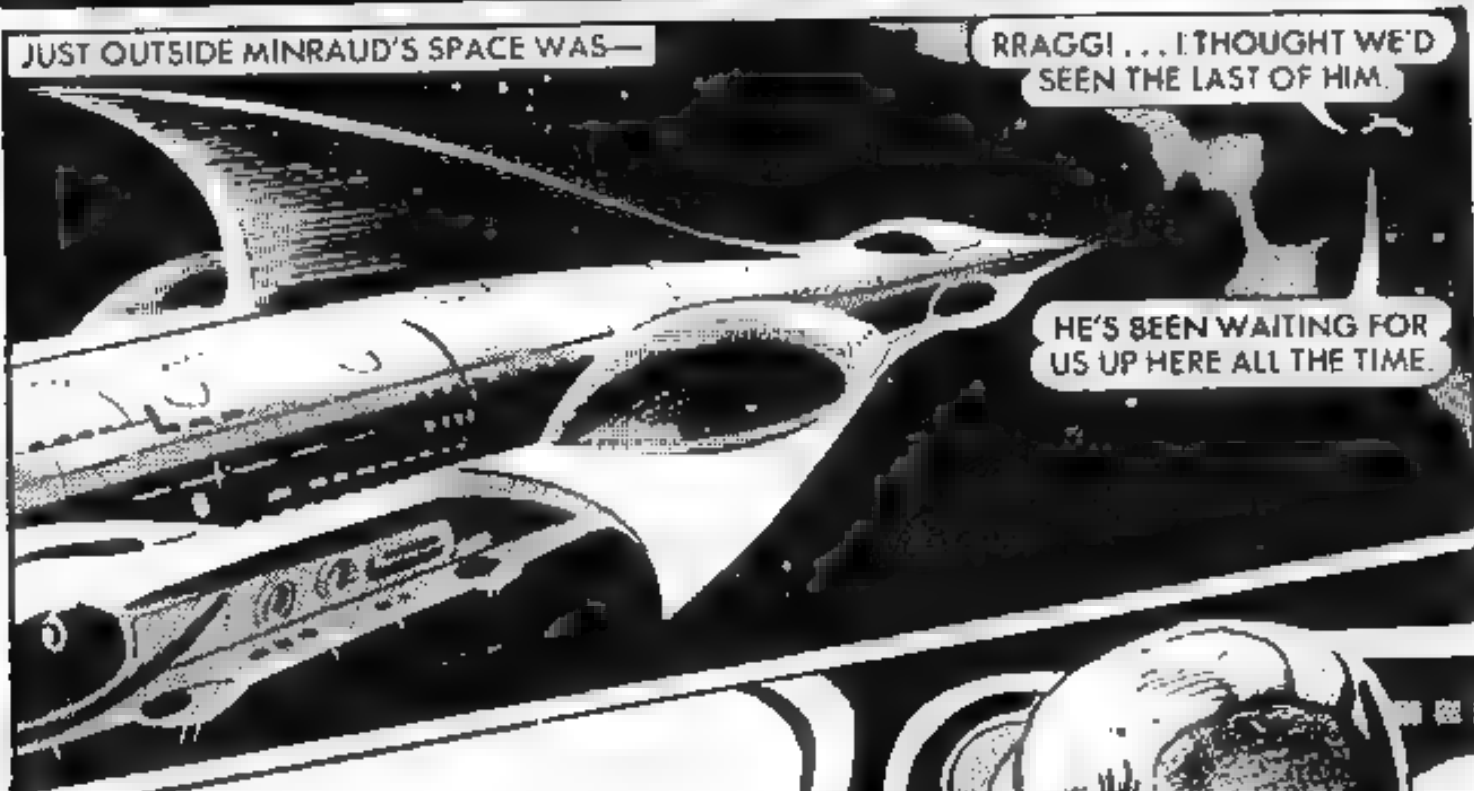
AS THE MINRAUD SHIPS BORE DOWN ON THE EARTH VESSEL —

FIRE!

WELL DONE, MATT. THAT'LL
GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.



JUST OUTSIDE MINRAUD'S SPACE WAS—




HERE WE GO AGAIN, MATT.



MORE MINRAUD SHIPS.


WHAT?





I HAVE AN IDEA
THAT MAY DELAY THEM A
LITTLE. PUT THE SHIP ON FULL
SPEED AND AUTO, THEN
DO AS I TELL YOU.

WHILE THE STARHOPPER CONTINUED TO STREAK AWAY FROM MINRAUD, BEN WAS BUSY
MODIFYING THE CIRCUITRY OF HIS COMMUNICATOR



OKAY... LET'S SEE IF THIS WORKS.
MEREDITH MORGAN CALLING ALL SHIPS,
MEREDITH MORGAN CALLING ALL SHIPS.
COME IN PLEASE. I WISH TO STOP
FIGHTING AND GIVE MYSELF UP.



BEN HAD MODIFIED THE COMMUNICATOR TO TRANSMIT AN ULTRA-HIGH FREQUENCY SIGNAL. THE EFFECT ON THE SHIPS LISTENING-IN WAS DEVASTATING.



WHILE RRAGG AND HIS MEN, AND THE OCCUPANTS OF THE MINRAUDAN SHIPS WERE RECOVERING FROM THE SHOCK TO THEIR NERVOUS SYSTEMS, BEN WAS RACING AWAY FROM THEM.



HERE THEY COME AGAIN.
DON'T THEY EVER GIVE UP?

THEIR ALIEN NERVOUS SYSTEMS ARE
DIFFERENT TO OURS, BEN. THEY MUST
RECOVER FROM THE EFFECTS OF
ULTRASONICS A LOT QUICKER.





I DON'T KNOW... WE CAN KEEP RUNNING, OR WE CAN PUT AN END TO IT ONCE AND FOR ALL.



YES I AM, BEN. I AGREE YOUR IDEA IS DANGEROUS, BUT IT MIGHT JUST WORK.

QUICKLY, BEN PUNCHED A SERIES OF CO-ORDINATES INTO THE AUTO-PILOT COMPUTER.

THAT OUGHT TO TAKE US PRETTY
CLOSE TO RRAGG'S SPACE STATION.
AND IT LEAVES MY HANDS FREE TO
DO SOME WORK. MATT—COVER
OUR REAR.

KEEP ON HIS TAIL, WE MUST CATCH
HIM.




THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT, THE MORE CERTAIN I AM THAT THIS PLAN WILL WORK, PROFESSOR. BUT I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT I'M EXPOSING MATT TO UNNECESSARY DANGER. ...

THE RISK IS GREAT, BEN, BUT HE'S HARDLY BEEN ON A PICNIC SINCE YOU ESCAPED FROM RRAGG, HAS HE?

LET'S SEE ... STEP THE FREQUENCY UP TO FIFTY-SEVEN K., ALTER THE TEMPORAL OSCILLATOR ... THREE—THAT OUGHT TO DO IT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING EXACTLY, BEN?






COOKING UP A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR
OUR FRIENDS BACK THERE . . . AND
HOPEFULLY WIPING OUT RAGG
AND HIS TERRORISTS ONCE AND FOR
ALL.



THE SPACE STATION! THIS IS
IT, MATT . . . THE SHOWDOWN.

THE EARTHMAN IS A FOOL. HE IS
GOING TO ATTACK MY
HEADQUARTERS.

ALERTED BY BRAGG, MORE TERRORIST STARSHIPS WERE LAUNCHED.
THEY RUSHED TO ATTACK THE STARHOPPER



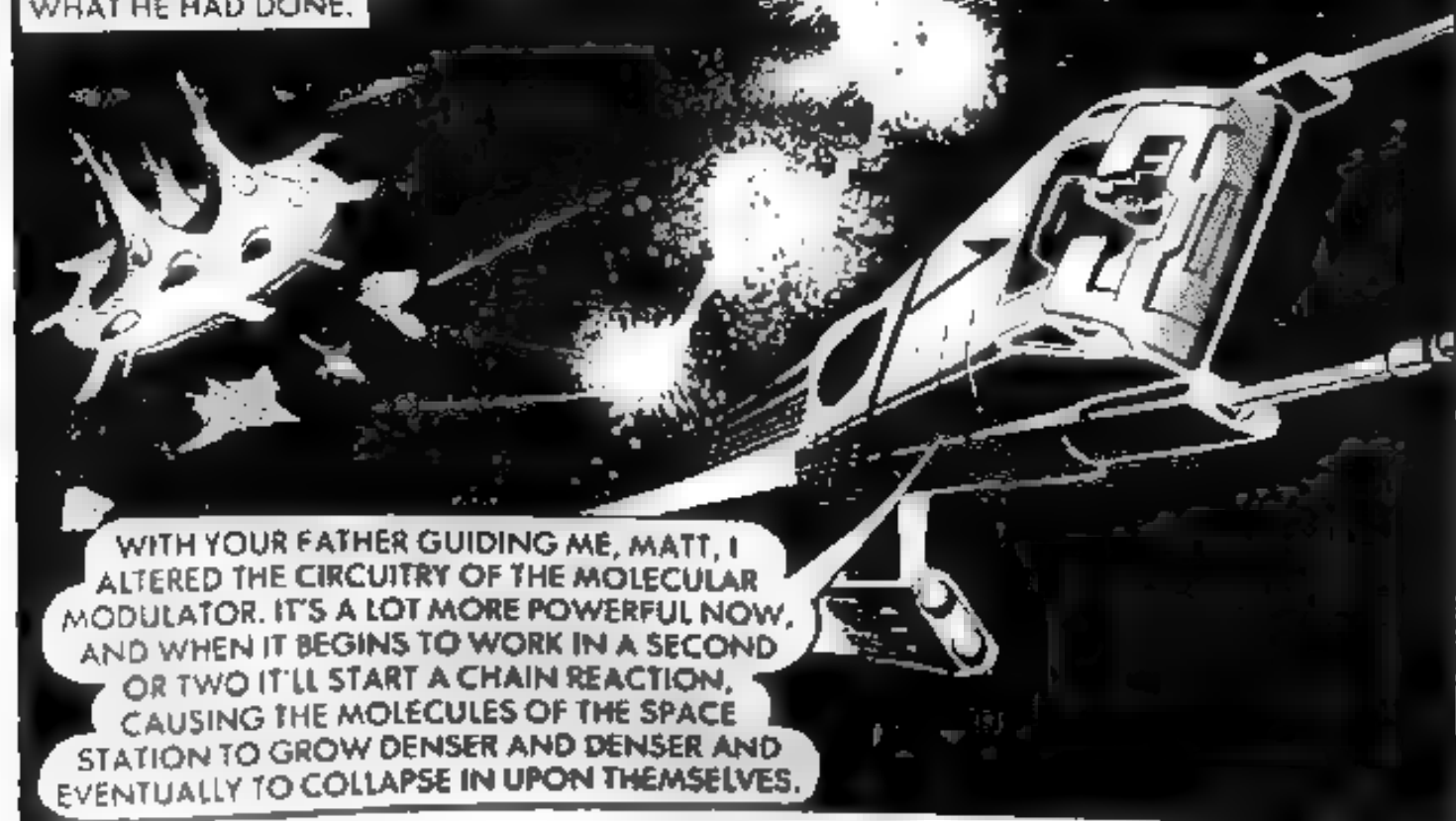
WE HAVE TO GET
CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE SPACE
STATION TO DROP OUR LITTLE
SURPRISE ON IT.

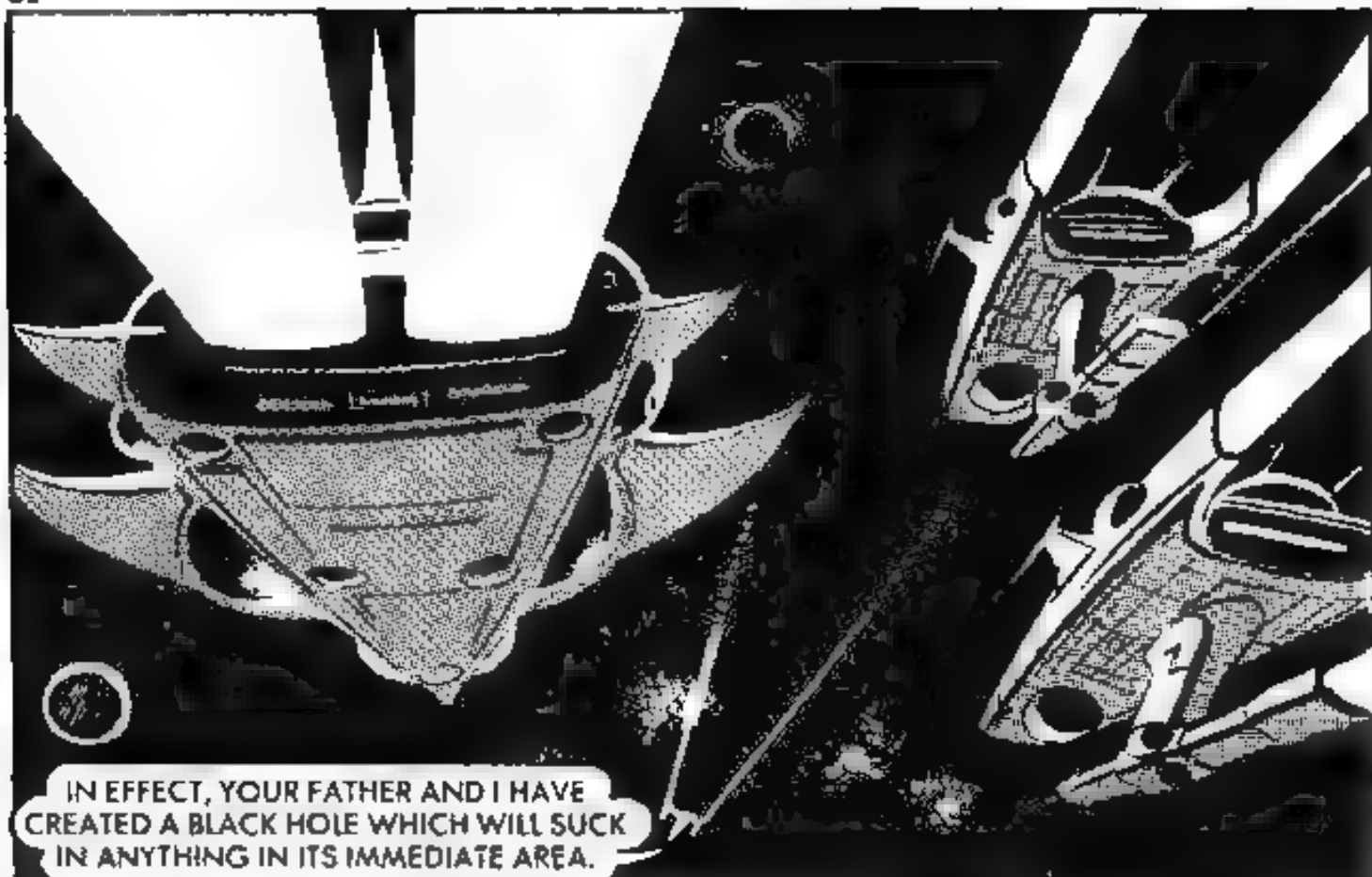


CLOSE ENOUGH?
FIRE!




BEN PUSHED THE STARHOPPER TO MAXIMUM SPEED, DRAINING EVERY LAST UNIT OF ENERGY FROM HER REACTORS, AND AS HE SPED AWAY FROM THE SPACE STATION HE EXPLAINED WHAT HE HAD DONE.





UNAWARE OF THE NEED TO CLEAR THE AREA OF THE SPACE STATION, RRAGG'S MEN AND THE SQUADRON FROM MINRAUD WERE SLOW TO REACT TO BEN'S LATEST HIGH SPEED ESCAPE.





HE HAS DESTROYED MY BASE AND WRECKED
MY ORGANISATION . . . NOW HE HAS ENSURED
THAT NONE OF US WILL ESCAPE . . .

THE SPACIAL VORTEX SHREDDED CRAFT INTO A MILLION PIECES.



EVEN BEN AND MATT FELT THE FATAL ATTRACTION OF THE BLACK HOLE, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE LIGHT YEARS AWAY—

SHIP'S SLOWING DOWN... WE'RE BEING PULLED BACKWARDS...

KEEP HER STEADY, BEN. USE AUXILIARY THRUSTERS, EJECT ALL EXCESS WEIGHT.




FINALLY THE SHIP BEGAN TO PULL AWAY.



BACK ON EARTH BEN RETURNED THE SYMBIOTRONIC HELMET TO THE WORLD COUNCIL.

HERE YOU ARE, GENTLEMEN. I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT
IT'S BEEN A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE SHARING
ANOTHER MAN'S BRAIN... BUT I'D HARDLY
CALL IT FUN.

A black and white comic panel showing Ben, a man in a flight suit, handing a helmet to a man in a military uniform. Other council members are visible in the background.

THE THREAT OF MINAUD STILL EXISTS...
WE MUST PREPARE FOR THAT.

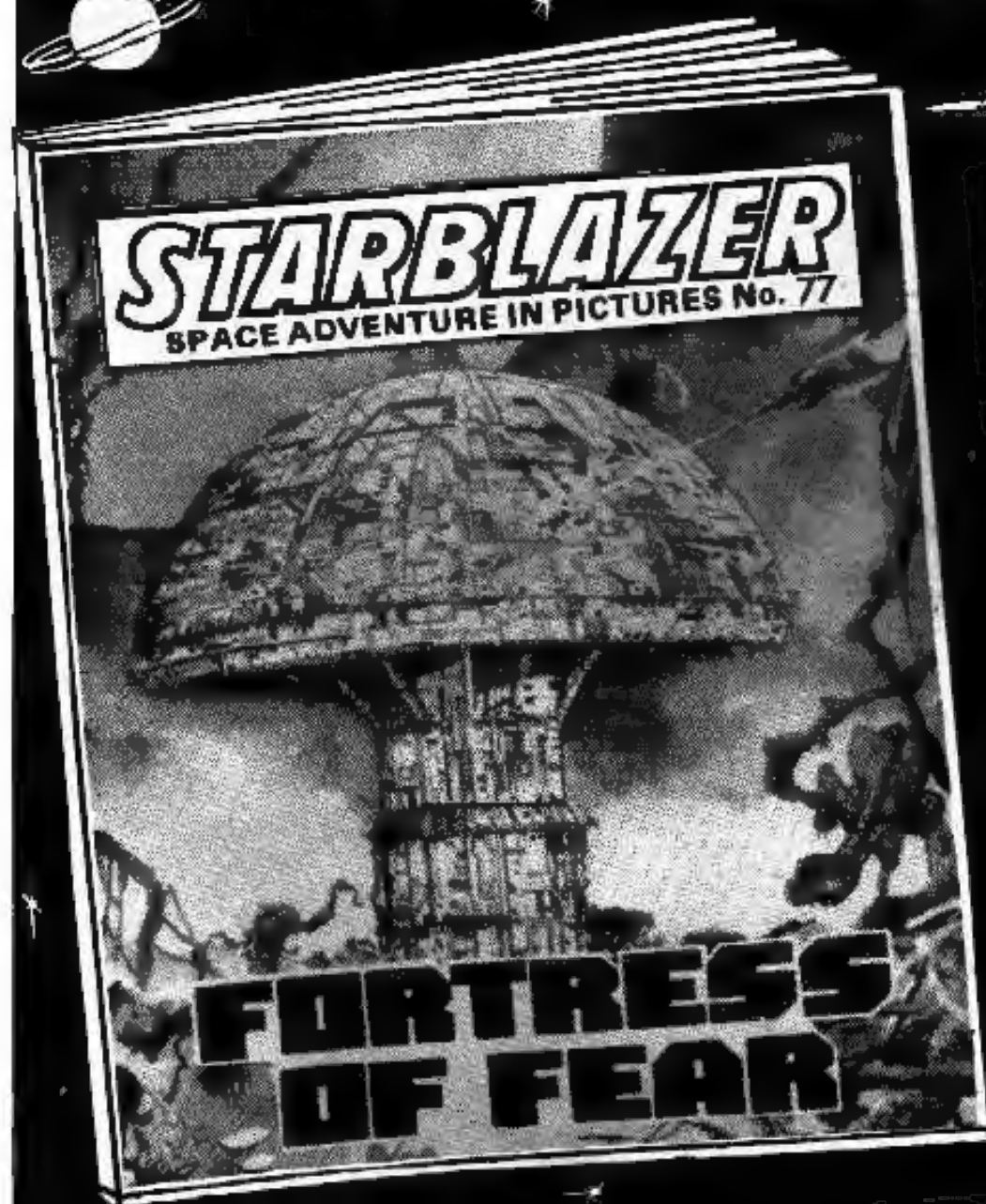
WE CANNOT DO IT ALONE!

A black and white comic panel showing a close-up of three men in military uniforms. The man in the center is wearing glasses and has a serious expression. The man on the right is older with a beard.



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**DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S
OTHER ACTION-PACKED
ADVENTURE**



NOW ON SALE

DUHR

ADHAFERA

ALGENUBI

ALGIEBA

REGULUS

CHORT

DENEbola



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STARBLAZERS' GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

LEO 5TH SIGN OF THE ZODIAC

The easily identified constellation of Leo lies in the Northern Hemisphere. Regulus (Alpha Leonis) is the brightest star, being of the first magnitude.